



June 28, 2005

The Hon. E. Clay Shaw
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Fax: 202-225-8398

Dear Chairman Shaw,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Consumers for World Trade (CWT) and our members, I'd like to express our strong support for passage of the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA).

CWT is a national, non-profit, non-partisan organization, established in 1978 to promote consumer interests in international trade and to raise public awareness of the benefits of an open, multilateral trading system. CWT is the only consumer group in America whose sole mission is to educate, advocate and mobilize consumers to support liberal trade policies.

Congress should pass this trade agreement for several reasons.

- First, from a consumer perspective, the increased competition the agreement will bring to U.S. markets will provide increased product choices and puts downward pressure on prices.
- Second, passing this FTA would demonstrate to the world that The U.S. is serious about lowering barriers to trade in the multilateral round of trade talks currently being conducted by the World Trade Organization.
- Third, it is important to give a strong Congressional endorsement for a comprehensive approach to trade agreements. If certain sectors are excluded from trade agreements, our partners will feel free to do the same. Exclusion of sugar or any other commodity jeopardizes our ability to conclude trade agreements that benefit every segment of our economy including consumers, workers, farmers, and employers. Sugar farmers account for only 1 percent of U.S. farm revenue. Rejecting DR-CAFTA to protect their interests robs other high-value segments of our economy, including U.S. manufacturing exporters and producers of other agricultural products of the benefits they would receive under the agreement.

Consumers for World Trade does not believe that the entire U.S. economy should pay to protect the interests of a handful of sugar farmers.

In conclusion, we urge all members of the Committee to weigh all interests equally and make a decision to support the DR-CAFTA agreement in the interest of the greater national good. While we recognize how politically difficult it is to stand up to protectionist interests, especially Big Sugar, it is nevertheless essential that you do so. Protectionism protects a few at the expense of millions of low-and-middle income Americans. We therefore ask that the Ways & Means Committee report DR-CAFTA without amendments and urge its prompt approval by the Congress.

Yours truly,

Pamela J. Slater
Executive Director
Consumers for World Trade

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